

June 29, 1999

MEMORANDUM FOR: FEC DISTRICT DIRECTORS

FROM: SHEILA M. WILLIAMS
 Acting Director for
 Federal Employees' Compensation

SUBJECT: Coding of Lost Time vs. No Lost Time Cases

An issue regarding initial coding of Notice of Injury forms has been brought to our attention by two Federal agencies pertaining to the keying of injury claims as lost time versus no lost time.

When a Notice of Injury form is received by the district office and referred to the Case Create section, one of the many data elements which is keyed into the data base at that time is a field called "EXTENT OF INJURY", indicating whether the case is classified as lost time, no lost time, first aid, or fatality at the time of case create. The Extent of Injury choice is made based on a review of information contained on the appropriate Notice of Injury form. On Form CA-1, box #38 indicates the appropriate field, while Form CA-2 reflects the extent of injury in box #26, and a case is classified as a fatality if it is received on Form CA-5 or CA-6.

Two separate Federal agencies have contacted this office, notifying us of their conclusions that Extent of Injury codes have been mis-keyed, based on their review of Notice of Injury forms forwarded to DFEC district offices. The two agencies in question, the Postal Service and the Department of Veterans Affairs, are notable because they are both large agencies who generally perform the same work nation-wide, reducing the chances that variations in Extent of Injury coding are due to low numbers of injury claims or regional variations in work performed by the agency in question.

Our review of the data does show variations in Extent of Injury coding in excess of those to be expected. Accurate keying of this data element is important from both the standpoint of Federal agencies, who are inspected by OSHA if they have a high lost-time injury rate, and from OWCP's standpoint, because we need to provide oversight bodies with accurate data regarding the severity of injury claims filed.

We are therefore asking each District Director to meet with Case Create personnel in the district office and remind them of their responsibility to accurately key a new injury claim as a lost time, no lost time, first aid or fatality case, as appropriate. On Form CA-1, the box which is checked in box #38 should also be entered into the DFEC data base regarding the Extent of Injury; only if that box is not checked, or the evidence clearly establishes that a case is coded incorrectly (such as a CA-7 claiming wage loss submitted along with Form CA-1 indicating no lost time), should a different choice be entered after a review of the supporting evidence submitted. The same rule applies to box #26 of Form CA-2; the box checked here should be entered by the case create section unless evidence submitted indicates that the box checked is incorrect.

We will monitor this situation for the quarter beginning July 1 and notify district offices of our review of this matter as necessary. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.